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15 March 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director

SUBJECT : The Office of Training

I understand you have raised questions about the thrust of the Agency training effort. Here is a brief description of it, along with the hope that we can discuss it more fully at your convenience.

1. The Office of Training has two main jobs: keeping up to date the knowledge and skills the Agency needs, and preparing for constant and accelerating change in its targets, functions, and approaches.

2. You can get a quick overview of the scope and variety of these efforts by leafing through the attached OTR Catalog. In FY72 OTR conducted 130 courses for 6,000 students over 69,400 student days. It administers the external program (2,800 students in FY72) and supports the training programs of other components (for example 54 highly technical courses given by the Office of Communications) which in FY72 trained another 4,000. Except for student salaries all this costs the Agency about [REDACTED]

3. Historically the Office of Training has always concentrated upon skills training, especially in skills needed for operations overseas. More of this below, but first it should be emphasized that in recent years OTR has been a component to look to for useful innovation. For example:


a. For twenty years the Agency's most comprehensive course has been in Basic Operations, the fundamental training for all case officers in recruiting and handling agents and in collecting and reporting information. It is always being revised and updated, now lasts 16 weeks, and trains about a hundred young officers a year. But in recent years we have added these and other types of training for use overseas:

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b. For years our course for new officers concentrated upon an introduction to the Agency, and then upon International Communism. But for several years now we have been putting the profession of intelligence into a wider context in our opening course and in others at mid and senior levels.


1) The opening course, now called Intelligence in World Affairs, discusses CIA in the context of the intelligence community, the foreign policy structure, the changing interests of the U. S. in a changing world, and in the context of American society. The main focus is on arousing interest in the potential challenge of an intelligence career.

2) Our Advanced Intelligence Seminar carries on the same effort at a higher level, designed for people with ten or more years of intelligence experience. The main thrusts come from bringing together people from all over the Agency to educate each other, presenting senior speakers from many Agency components, and bringing in distinguished outsiders to stretch minds and horizons. (The Mid-Career Course, our most popular ever since it started in 1964, serves something of the same purpose, but leans most heavily on senior Agency speakers from the DCI on down.)

3) Our Senior Seminar, started in late 1971 for groups of 20 GS-15s and supergrades from all over the Agency, carries this process as far as we can go in nine weeks. The students learn more about CIA from each other than they have learned in many years of experience in one directorate, and are brought into sharp confrontation with the need for new ideas and approaches by a wide variety of outsiders.

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d. OTR has taken over the training program in Information Science formerly presented by DIA (with CIA help) for the whole community. The courses are heavily oversubscribed far in advance, and we face the question of cutting them back to handle CIA students only or of expanding the effort into a permanent—and expensive—community-wide asset. OTR has been gradually expanding its attention to such aspects of analytical method as Bayesian analysis, the Delphi process, and probability theory, but the main current effort is to train the growing band of consumers of present and prospective applications of ADP and related technology.

e. Long convinced of the dangers of tribalism, OTR has put great stress on bringing the tribes together, not only in the courses described above, but in special courses: for example, one course to explain the Directorate of Operations to the Directorate of Science and Technology and another in the opposite direction.

f. Courses in management, which began a dozen years ago with packaged presentations by outside consultants, have evolved into in-house training at several levels from the first-echelon supervisor on up, and with the strong support of Mr. Colby are still evolving. Together with those described in b above, they make up a basic core of courses useful for career development throughout the Agency at all levels. Taken with training in languages, external training, specific skills training like operations or analysis, and general skills training like those in writing, effective briefing, and reading improvement, they make it possible for the Agency's management to tailor career development programs appropriate for each component and each type of employee at every stage.

g. OTR is always sloughing off old courses and developing new ones in an effort to anticipate future problems of intelligence. We put on an Agency forum on drug abuse and the international drug traffic before that became a priority target for CIA, and took an early part in devising training for the BNDD and other agencies. We persuaded OER to collaborate on a forum on the growing general importance of economic intelligence before this was recognized as an Agency-wide problem. Our continuing seminar on Latin America pioneered an effort now being developed by the Directorate of Intelligence on other areas. The domestic context of intelligence has been brought to Agency attention by presentations (some in the Auditorium) on youth problems, racial problems, ecology, demography, and the New Left.

h. Two fairly new courses are called "Large-Scale Systems Analysis" (with the Directorate of Science and Technology) and "The Project Officer in the Contract Cycle" (with Logistics, Finance, and others). Our newest course is for senior secretaries: "Office Management." Our next new one, "CIA Today and Tomorrow," begins in late March; after its first trial running it will be put on in the Auditorium for all employees who need updating. All work on curriculum new or old is done by OTR in consultation with all appropriate elements of the Agency, under the aegis of our Curriculum Council and my special assistant for Curriculum Development; they rigorously examine all questions of need, relevance, training objectives, duration (one half-day to sixteen weeks), frequency, size, etc., etc. We always pay close attention to student critiques.

i. Concern with the technology of training has led OTR to experiment as much as we can afford, and with some success. One pioneering effort has been the move from reel-to-reel language tapes to cassettes which students can listen to at home or driving to and from work. We are expanding our use of closed-circuit TV, for example in taping student presentations in our effective briefing course or performance in live-situation problems in our ops courses; the playbacks are splendidly effective teachers. Program-assisted instruction has been valuable in elementary language courses, and we would like to go further both with that and with computer-assisted instruction. We have made movies, both for ourselves and for others in the Agency, and could usefully make more. We have published a number of handbooks ranging from the two-volume Agent Training Kit for use by case officers overseas to manuals on the work of OCI and ONE.

4. Half of our 130 courses are devoted to foreign languages, 23 of them at all levels. Enrollment is now the highest ever, so that eventually the Agency may replace the high language skills it is now rapidly losing through retirements. Part-time language training in the Headquarters building has especially increased lately, and we are developing language training for dependents going abroad. We also send students to the FSI and DLI schools, and [REDACTED]

STATINTL [REDACTED] We test all language skills and aptitudes, and maintain the Agency's register of language skills under a system devised by the Agency-wide Language Development Committee chaired by the Deputy Director of Training.

5. One important function of OTR is too complex to discuss adequately in a brief paper. This is the Career Training Program; it is surrounded by myths and misinformation much of which dates from situations and opinions generated years ago and long since out of date. But three things can be said about it: 1) it has brought an enormous diversity of talent, skill, and flair into the Agency in its twenty years of operation; 2) its very success caused it to be expanded past the point where both recruitment and training could be kept at optimum, so that four years ago it was

improved by cutting it back; and 3) the courses and outlook which OTR developed for the Career Training Program have now redounded to the benefit of all young officers whether CTs or not. But much more needs to be said.

6. One last point: OTR is responsible for the publication of the Agency's quarterly learned journal, Studies in Intelligence. The full-time editor is a member of the OTR staff, and the Director of Training is the current chairman of the Agency-wide board of editors. Several recent changes give promise of increasing its effectiveness as the Agency's memory and provocation of new thought.

7. This account has been sufficiently immodest, for we are proud of OTR, but not smug, for we know that very much remains to be done. One sample prescription may be seen in the attached outline of ideas for OTR which I jotted down more than four years ago, on being told I was about to take it over; some of the ideas have been carried out, some may have been too ambitious, but some seem to me to have some value for my successor.

HUGH T. CUNNINGHAM
Director of Training

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cc: Mr. Brownman (w/atts)